



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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*Today's plea agreement is available in .pdf format and may be downloaded
from the district's Web site at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/news2006/leighton_plea.pdf*

OLATHE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTEMPTING TO ENTICE A MINOR FOR SEX

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that an Olathe, Kan., man pleaded guilty in federal court today with attempting to entice a minor to engage in illicit sex.

Matthew Hunter Leighton, 23, of Olathe, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs this morning to the charge contained in an Aug. 17, 2006, federal indictment.

“These undercover investigations are critical to stopping sexual predators,” Graves said. “Tragically, in this case, there were a number of young girls who were victimized by the defendant before he was caught. Because of his background of child sexual exploitation, we will ask the court to impose the toughest possible sentence in order to protect future victims.”

Leighton admitted that he made contact several times between July 8 and 19, 2005, with a person he believed to be a 13-year-old girl in the Kansas City area. In reality, Graves said, the person was an undercover FBI agent. In a series of instant messages, e-mails and telephone calls during that period, **Leighton** discussed, in explicit language, meeting the girl for sex, and sent her an explicit picture of himself. He arrived to meet her at a specified Northland location on July 19, 2005, and was arrested by law enforcement officers. He had five condoms in his pocket at the time of his arrest.

“This investigation was initiated when the mother of one of the real victims contacted the FBI,” Graves said. “She reported that an adult male had contacted her 15-year-old daughter online, and she suspected they were meeting for sexual activities.”

Leighton admitted that he has met about 100 girls in person that he initially met online, and that he has had sex with 10 of them, including several who were under the age of 18. Since he was 18 years old, **Leighton** has met and had sex with four minors whom he met online.

Under federal statutes, **Leighton** could be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in federal prison without parole, up to 30 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Cynthia L. Phillips. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow